



Just Open the Door: How One Invitation Can Change a Generation

Jen Schmidt

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Just Open the Door: How One Invitation Can Change a Generation Jen Schmidt Change a generation with something as simple as an invitation.

For many of us, inviting people into our lives and homes feels more like inviting judgment on our entertaining skills and stress on our already maxed-out schedules. But what if you knew that opening your front door had the power to radically change the world? To make an impact and leave a legacy with everyday invitations?

Jen Schmidt has set out to reframe how we think about hospitality and to equip us to walk a road of welcome in our daily lives. Jen knows that every time we choose open-door living—whether in our homes or by taking hospitality on the road just like Jesus—those we invite in get to experience the lived-out Gospel, our kids grow up in a life-lab of generosity, and we trade insecurity for connection.

Just Open the Door is a personal yes-you-can guide to offering the life-changing gift of invitation. Whether you're a seasoned host looking for renewed inspiration or a nervous newbie not sure where to begin, these personal stories, practical ideas, and poignant insights will give you the confidence you need to see your home as the most likely location for changing the world around you, one open door at a time.

Just Open the Door: How One Invitation Can Change a Generation Details

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Author : Jen Schmidt

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From Reader Review Just Open the Door: How One Invitation Can Change a Generation for online ebook

Jill says

A book for the hesitant host. The author gives numerous examples, ideas, and personal experiences to put anyone at greater ease when contemplating opening the door to a friendship. I appreciated the letters at the end of each chapter which addressed concerns and gave practical advice for how to work with individual limits or circumstances. The chapters are written in small steps I didn't feel too scared to try. I don't (and won't) be ready to be as exuberant and open of a host right now as the author is. She has a bit of head start on me. But her experienced suggestions were helpful. I followed through on some little niggling ideas to just open my mouth and invite our neighbors over for my first attempt of the season at a grilled pizza.. I'm still growing in this area. But this book helped me get out of my worries and think more about the worries of those around me.

Bravely written to make this introvert a bit braver in acting on a little more kindness to those in need of a place to rest and renew for any space of time.

I received a free copy of this ebook from the publisher via NetGalley. My responses and review are honest and my own.

Debbie Lester says

I don't know about you guys but when it comes to hospitality and entertaining, I always feel like that's somebody else's niche, not mine. I think about all reasons not to do it and not all of the reasons to do it. Jen Schmidt's new book, Just Open the Door has a completely take on what it means to open your door to other people. It's more about them than it is about you. With tons of practical advice and tips, this a must read for anyone who wants to not only entertain but to connect with other people.

What I liked:

There were so many things I liked about this book. When I found out I had the opportunity to read and review Just Open the Door, I will admit I was skeptical. Not because I thought it wouldn't be a good book, I knew it would. I love Jen's blog and her style and I was positive it would be both a good read but very practical and spiritually based. But, I'm not that person that invites people over. I'm a book reader, an introvert at times and I like quiet and solitude most of the time. Calm and zen. That's what I need to focus and to keep my anxiety at a tolerable level. But let me tell you, this book blew me away.

Jen was able to make me, one of the least likely people to invite others over, want to do so. I always worry about having enough food, the right furnishings. I want things to be perfect and lets face it, they usually aren't. But Just Open the Door is more focused on what you are doing for others by letting them into your home and life than what it's doing for you. We often times are so worried about what other people would think of what we have and don't have to realize what an encouraging and thoughtful thing it is to let someone

in.

I was so encouraged by the way Jen Schmidt made it seem so easy in every aspect. She talks about everything from introverts to neighboring. She gives practical tips and ideas and relates everything back to spiritual principles. I had never even thought of hospitality in this way before. We live in such a socially conscious world. It's all about social media and presenting your best face to the world. We have gotten away from being connected to each other and spending good quality time together.

I loved the humor and practicality of this book as well. You'll have to read it to figure out what the "Bra and the Broom" method is lol... I related to this book so much. I see all of these great things on Pinterest, like table settings and ideas for entertaining and I'm like... there's no way I can do that. But this book shows you that people are more interested in the fact that you want to spend time with them. They don't care what your table looks like. I loved it!

What I didn't like:

There wasn't anything about this book that I didn't like. I know that some of you might think, so this is a Christian book and probably not my thing. Listen, it is based on spiritual teachings and for me that was wonderful, but it is not a book that is preachy or overbearing. Schmidt is able to make this subject relate to simply anyone and that's the beauty of it.

Bottom Line:

Even if you think, you can't just open your door, this book proves you can. It's okay to let people in. It's okay to make them feel like you want them in your home and your life. I can't recommend this one enough. Such a great lesson in what it means to be hospitable. Also, if you haven't checked out Jen's website, I encourage you to do so. It's amazing!

Lindsay says

An inspiring call to practice hospitality! Loved it!

Amanda says

An open, honest, and thorough look at Biblical hospitality. I love the personal stories Jen includes to really bring her message home. She touches on what authentic hospitality really IS, the hang-ups that keep us from practicing it, and includes many simple ways to get started. This is a fun, encouraging read that has me

questioning what I can do to be a better friend and neighbor. A good read whether you are young, old, single, married, parent, etc. It is a universal message!

Denise Lilly says

I appreciated Schmidt's heart for hospitality. She makes a compelling case for Christians going above and beyond what feels comfortable to serve people in our homes. Her own stories were inspiring, and I appreciated the practical tips.

Nora St Laurent says

I was intrigued by this companion book to a bible study by the same name. I liked that the author shares from the heart and doesn't make things complicated. I felt as if we were sitting down for coffee swapping family stories about how God moved in our lives. I didn't feel intimidated or bad as Jen talks about her learning journey in hospitality from scripture and points to Bible reference that show how Jesus and others loved their neighbor. She talks about how she watched her parents; "an ordinary couple living the natural outflow of their faith, putting a smiling face on their heart of welcome". She says "But the aroma, it created drew others in and changed the dynamic. It changed people's lives"

I was blown away when this author explained the difference between hospitality and entertaining. I hadn't a clue. She talks more about this topic but basically she says, "...Biblical hospitality offers our best to God first, understanding that our best to others will then fall into place. It transforms our selfish motives and elevates our guests...All the attention focuses outward: "You're here! I've been waiting for you. No one is more important than you today & I'm thrilled you could come."..."Extending hospitality is about freely giving of ourselves while granting others the freedom to be themselves. Shifting our focus from us to them removes all unnecessary expectations." I loved that.

The author points out that the Old testament God tells us to welcome and love strangers. "In the New Testament early believers took the command seriously and used their homes as a place for extending grace to others."

There is so much inside this 250-page book. Some of the topics talked about are: Everyday Moments, Who are my Neighbors, Come as You are, The Elephant in the room, Spontaneous vs on purpose, Hospitality as worship and so much more. I highly recommend this book and study to everyone.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher & Netgalley. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising"

Nora St. Laurent

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The Book Club Network blog www.psalm516.blogspot.com

Book Fun Magazine <https://tinyurl.com/y91wbfrs>

SVP Promotion

Michele Morin says

We were new in church and new to the area, and our little three-bedroom fixer-upper was situated in a part of the universe in which it didn't matter that we had been born and bred in Maine. We had not been born and bred in this part of Maine, and we had the accent (or lack of same) to prove it.

We knew we had some work to do if we were ever going to live our way into the homes and hearts of people in Mid-coast Maine. We also knew the answer was, of course, to go first — to begin inviting people for Sunday dinner or Saturday night dessert and a movie. But here's the catch: four babies in eight years makes for a complicated math that drains the budget and strains all available time and energy for home improvement projects. As the years passed, the fixer-upper still looked pretty un-fixed as we replaced the furnace and shingled the roof, bought sneakers and paid for home school curriculum. Somehow, though, we knew that this was not the time to put life on hold.

In a deliberate act of hospitality, we set a goal of inviting one new couple each month for Friday night supper. We opened our door, inviting guests into our own unique chaos of high chairs and sheet rock, half-painted woodwork and ugly kitchen cabinets. This was our way of opening up our life and inviting others to open theirs to us.

The Hospitable Life

Reading Just Open the Door: How One Invitation Can Change a Generation, I felt Jen Schmidt and the whole (in)courage team nodding and smiling in agreement that true hospitality is nothing more (and nothing less!) than “an ordinary couple [making] a deliberate decision, intent on getting to know the people around them from more than a polite distance.” (2) In Romans 12:3, the Apostle Paul puts a strong verb in front of the word hospitality when he urges Roman believers who were facing persecution to “pursue hospitality.”

Hospitality, then, is not wild creativity on display, nor is it a demonstration of expert cooking skill. It's a way of life that wonders:

“Whom can I love on today?”
“Who needs encouragement?”

Each chapter of Just Open the Door unpacks a different facet of the hospitable life with words of encouragement and stories lifted from Jen Schmidt's own parenting, inviting, tail-gating, pot-lucking life. For every “have to” moment in your day, Jen invites you to switch the sentiment to “get to,” as in “Today, I get to change the sheets in the guest room.” A life marked by gratitude opens up the floodgates to all kinds of hospitality.

Hospitality: Will Travel
A blanket on the beach;
The bleachers at a ball game;
A picnic table at a state park;
Your church's fellowship hall—
Simple refreshments and a warm welcome transform any space into hospitality ground-zero.

At the end of each chapter, Schmidt shares tips that “Elevate the Ordinary,” because intentionally loving others transforms paper plates and styrofoam coffee cups into fine china. Be a gatherer of people, and you

will not lack opportunities to love your neighbor.

Come As You Are

Even if you are not “fine,” you need not be alone if there are people in your life with whom you are free to exchange the gift of your own imperfection (119) for the gift of their listening ear. The whole family can get in on the opportunity to neighbor broadly and indiscriminately in simple ways such as picking up the trash that lands along the streets or making conversation about dogs and kids.

Our children have received great benefits from being included in multi-generational gatherings, and we have also loved hosting their friends. Everything from spontaneous gatherings around the fire pit for s’mores and firefly sightings to huge gatherings with lace tablecloths and the best dishes have been part of our family’s culture. Jen has spoken truth in her subtitle, “One Invitation Can Change a Generation.” These days the tables get turned sometimes as our married sons and their wives invite us to their homes to be blessed and fed and connected with family and friends.

“Grace On, Guilt Off”

Things will not always go well.

Events will not necessarily unfold according to plan.

There will be seasons in which hospitality is just not possible, and you may need to be the object of someone else’s care and love. God has a way of showing up in unexpected ways, showering grace into a situation that looks hopeless.

“Opening the door when we aren’t ready defines hospitality in the deepest sense of the word.” (195)

Throwing wide the door of welcome, we embody God’s welcome and put the Gospel’s warm, life-giving hospitality on display for a world of people whose life may be changed by one simple invitation from an open and responsive heart. When we open the door, we mirror God’s acceptance, and I’m coming away from Jen Schmidt’s soft-spoken challenge with a renewed desire to lean into the risk, to open the door when I’m not quite prepared as an act of faith: “Lord, what are you about to do here?” Relaxing my need for control frees Him to work as table becomes altar, hostess becomes servant, and my open door becomes an invitation to New Life with Him.

Many thanks to B&H Books for providing this book to facilitate my review, which, of course, is offered freely and with complete honesty.

Rebekah McGee says

Great book on my why Christians practice hospitality and also practical tips.

Jolanthe says

So many words of encouragement and gentle nudges to help us get over our fears of inviting others into our spaces and sharing the gift of hospitality. It doesn’t have to be a scary and overwhelming thing! Jen shares practical insights, each chapter is full of heartfelt advice and ways to “elevate the ordinary” in our hosting adventures. I love that it is chocked full of honest looks into their family (mistakes and laughter), making it

relatable and do-able. So many great ideas and ear-marked pages and inspiration to invite others in.

Mechthild says

Hospitality is not beyond you even when it does not come naturally to you

Published by the B & H Publishing Group, Jen Schmidt presents "Just Open the Door. How One Invitation Can Change a Generation". Schmidt shows that not only the extroverts, but also the shy and introvert as well as people who live in small places can be creative in receiving visitors in their homes and show them a hospitality that bears fruit. Schmidt writes from her own heart and experiences. She shows how she herself worked in small steps which encourages the reader to try them also. Then the fear of inviting judgement, the fear of limited entertainment skills and the fear that there will not be place in an already loaded time-table will be more manageable and positive experiences can take place. Schmidt based this book on the Bible where the central message can be found in Romans 12. Every chapter presents answers to real-life questions about hospitality which were asked on her blog. Some chapters also offer "Extra Helpings" written by family members or friends that fit the topic presented in the previous chapter.

I appreciate the book and highly recommend it because it shows the reader that she (or he) can take small steps in opening their home (and heart), welcoming strangers and offering hospitality just as Jesus did. It is a valuable resource especially to people (such as I) who have not learned the art of hospitality from their mothers, but also for everybody else who wants to apply hospitality.

The complimentary copy of this book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley free of charge. I was under no obligation to offer a positive review. Opinions expressed in this review are completely my own.

#JustOpenTheDoor #NetGalley

Leah Good says

You guys, I loooooved this book! Probably my favorite book of the year so far. I laughed, I cried (good tears), my heart was warmed, I was inspired. If you have any aspirations for hospitality, READ THIS BOOK!

This year has been, for all practical purposes, the beginning of my efforts to offer hospitality in my own rights. My own brand of hospitality. I love having people over, feeding them, hoping they feel at home in my home. But I've also found that hosting people (especially around a full time work schedule and long commute) frequently creates a cycle of cooking, cleaning, shopping, and socializing that can be exhausting even when you treasure every moment spent with friends. I was feeling especially tired a few weeks ago and prayed that God would refresh me and help me have a joyful, generous attitude towards hospitality. Right after praying that, I heard an interview with Jen Schmidt on The Home and Hearth podcast and immediately wanted to read her book. I couldn't get the book out of my head. So I used my monthly Audible credit on it and started listening.

Suffice it to say, God answered my prayer in the "pages" of this book. (Pages in quotes since I listed to the audible audio.) I was reminded, as I am weekly if not daily, of how blessed I am to be part of the family of God where even brothers and sisters that might never meet, like Jen Schmidt and myself, can be used of God to encourage each other. I was reminded of how hospitality can be simultaneously simple and powerful. As a girl whose primary love language is words of affirmation, this book gave me those words to affirm that my still-learning efforts to open doors that aren't even really mine yet are worth it.

Tonight my brother and I had neighbors (literal neighbors) over for the first time ever and it was wonderful and it never would have happened without this book. I can't wait to see where God brings the message of *Just Open the Door* in my life.

Patch405 says

A more elaborate review has been posted on my blog: <https://patch405.com/2018/07/10/book-...>

To quote Jen Schmidt, "Somehow we've dressed up this simple desire to gather, and we've laced it with imposing expectations and the pressure of performance." If this quote resonates with you, please consider finding encouragement and inspiration in *Just Open the Door*.

The book is biblically based, and draws its core message from the love in action section of Romans 12, specifically verse 13: "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." In Christian circles, we often talk about spiritual gifts. Schmidt is quick to note that hospitality isn't assigned to those possessing the gift, but a command to all of us.

The book encourages and inspires the reader. It pushes you to think beyond the obvious. Chapters are supplemented by real-life questions that Schmidt has received in letters from her readers. Schmidt also provides suggestions to take your hospitality to the next level. An added bonus is snippets from guest contributors – who include members of her family and close friends.

(I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. All thoughts are my own.)

Sarah says

Just Open the Door by Jen Schmidt is a welcoming book on hospitality. It's filled with tips on how to do well at bringing people together at home or on the go, but the most important focus is on bringing people to Christ. I found this book to be very inspiring and family-focused.

Jen writes, "Changing the world starts today." (p. 39) She's right! If we wait until another day to begin changing the world, it's not likely to change because things will get in the way. How does Jen suggest that we can begin changing the world? An invitation: "One invitation may change a generation." (p. 40) An invitation to our dinner tables, our church events, our lives can help us point others to Christ.

Throughout the book, Jen uses Scripture to explain why hospitality is so important. She uses the life of Jesus to illustrate the example laid before us in hospitality - through inviting, gathering around the dinner table, and doing Bible studies together. Just as Jesus said to his disciples, "Come and see," we can point others to Him too. (John 1:39) When we demonstrate hospitality to others in front of our children, we can provide them examples of how to live out hospitality as well. In fact, it can change lives of the next several generations: "Living a life of welcome lets us cast a long-term, multigenerational vision for our children." (p. 140)

If you're looking for a book on hospitality, this one is a good choice! I recommend it! Therefore, I give this Bible version five out of five stars. I received this book from BHbloggers.com for an honest review.

Marie Bungard says

Have you ever read something that resonates with every part of your being? Something that you can so relate to that you're surprised you didn't think of it?

Just Open The Door by Jen Schmidt is that kind of book. True hospitality is about serving others, whether we want to or not, and she definitely has all her 'eggs' in the right basket for it.

With our noses buried in cell phones and computers, we are missing some of the greatest experiences of life. That of face to face conversations that help us know those around us, their needs, wants and desires. The nuances that come with face-to-face conversations simply don't show in techno-babble.

As Believers hospitality allows us to be purposeful in our walk with others. We can encourage others, disciple others, and even bring others into the fold, simply by sharing a cup of coffee and sincerely listening and loving on them. Don't worry about that spot on the carpet or children making too much noise or messy hair. It is what it is! All that really matters is God, His Word, and relationships.

Expecting nothing in return is a characteristic of the hospitable personality. A bag of groceries, a box of diapers, \$20 in an unopened envelope show the heart of Jesus to another person.

Adoption might be the ultimate act of hospitality. Just as God adopts me into the Forever Family I am to 'adopt' others into my earthly family.

This book is jam-packed full of ideas for living out hospitality as God intended us to. I highly recommend reading it over and over.

Here are my top 5 quotes from this book:

Your unique gift, your untold story, your broken and mended heart, your fierce love, your brave authenticity-all these intricate threads woven together create a tapestry He wants to use to unveil His love to someone who needs to experience it. You are the one who can meet the need of another today if you just open the door. (pg. 77)

"For me, taking up my cross daily included terrible suffering. For you, your suffering may be in the form of doing small duties that are distasteful to you. It may be having what you don't want or wanting what you don't have. That may be your cross today." (pg. 52)

We can't let our circumstances keep us separated from the community we need. (pg. 131)

Taking tea together reminds us to mimic Jesus' pace. He was never too busy. He was never in a hurry.

Frantic was not a part of His vocabulary. He lingered. (pg. 154)

One of the purest forms of compassion is found in hurting when someone else hurts. (pg. 190).

Never underestimate the power of a cup of coffee and a listening ear.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Broadman Holman Publishers, Inc. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Julia says

This book was AMAZING. I cannot recommend it enough. I devoured this book, literally reading it in a couple of days (and staying up way too late to do so). Jen's very relatable tone as she writes - with humour, honesty, and conversation - makes this easy to read. Her practical tips and letters at the end of each chapter gave enough 'how-to' to make the book easy to put into practice, without feeling like you were reading a self-help book.

Ultimately, while the book is about hospitality, it challenged me to open not just my home, but my heart and my life to those around me. I'm eager to get my hands on the Bible study that accompanies, and am participating in the online book club!
